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BCStats

Infoline

Contact: bcstats.infoline@gov.bc.ca *Issue: 10-27* *July 9, 2010*

- **BC's jobless rate inches up to 7.8% in June**
- **Olympic aftermath: room revenues fall 42.8% in March**
- **Housing starts rise 5.2% in June**

Labour Force

- **British Columbia's jobless rate rose for the second time in as many months, inching ahead 0.3 percentage points to 7.8% (*seasonally adjusted*) in June.** The increase in the unemployment rate was the result of more people looking for work than in the previous month. The expansion of the province's labour force (+0.6%) outpaced growth in employment (+0.3%).

  In the goods sector (-1.5%), an increase in the number of workers in forestry, fishing and mining (+2.9%) was overshadowed by workforce contractions in both construction (-2.7%) and manufacturing (-1.9%). On the services side (+0.7%), employment increases in finance, insurance & real estate (+7.8%) and health care & social assistance (+4.5%) offset declines in transportation & warehousing (-4.5%), business, building & other support services (-4.1%). Employment was also off in wholesale & retail trade (-1.2%).

  Data Source: Statistics Canada

- **At the regional level, unemployment rates (*3-month moving average, unadjusted*) ranged from a low of 5.5% in Vancouver Island/Coast to a high of 11.4% in North Coast/Nechako.** Compared to the same time last year, both North Coast/Nechako (-4.7%), and Kootenay (-1.7%) posted lower levels of employment, while Thompson/Okanagan (+6.0%), Cariboo (+9.3%) and Northeast (+13.2%) registered the largest increases.

  While Vancouver's unemployment rate remained unchanged in June, employment did expand 0.5%. Conversely, a dip in Victoria's jobless rate to 5.4% was entirely the result of a contraction in the city's labour force.

  Data Source: Statistics Canada

- **Nationally, employment gains (+93,000), largely concentrated in Ontario (+60,300) and Quebec (+30,400), pushed the country's jobless rate down to 7.9%.** Job growth in June was more or less evenly divided between full-time (+0.4%) and part-time (+1.4%) work with notable increases registered in business, building & other support services (+2.9%) and wholesale & retail trade (+0.8%).

  Data Source: Statistics Canada

The Economy

- **Municipalities in British Columbia issued building permits worth $754.1 million (*seasonally adjusted*) in May, an 11.9% jump from the previous month.** Expansions in both multi-family dwellings and institutional building plans were the main reasons for the increase.

  Nationally, the value of building permits fell for a third consecutive month, slumping 10.8% in May. Nova Scotia (-58.8%), Alberta (-28.6%) and Ontario (-8.9%) registered the largest drop in permits, while British Columbia (+11.9%) and Saskatchewan (+16.0%) posted the strongest increases.

  Data Source: Statistics Canada

- **Room revenues in British Columbia receded in March (-42.8%, *seasonally adjusted*) as Mainland/Southwest (-57.9%) revenues contracted in the wake of the Olympic Winter Games held in Vancouver in February.** Although Thompson/Okanagan (-2.7%), Kootenay (-4.0%) and Nechako (-3.6%) also

Report **High Technology Occupations**

Did you know...

More than three-quarters of Canadians believe it is important that Canada is represented by a team at the next FIFA World Cup™ in 2014.

Data Source: Ipsos Canada

saw room receipts slip, Vancouver Island/Coast (+1.2%), Cariboo (+2.7%), North Coast (+7.2%) and Northeast (+3.9%) had a positive month.

The departure of tourists and athletes brought along a drop (-46.5%) in revenues for all hotel categories. Receipts at very large (251+ rooms; -53.0%), large (151-250 rooms; -50.9%), mid-sized (76-150 rooms; -39.9%) and small (1-75 rooms; -34.2%) hotels were all down. Other accommodation types also lost ground in terms of room revenue, most notably vacation rentals (-45.8%). *Data Source: BC Stats*

- **Housing starts in British Columbia rose 5.2% (*seasonally adjusted*) between May and June.** Urban starts were up 6.3%, largely driven by single-detached (+9.3%) and multiple (+3.9%) family dwellings. Rural housing starts in BC were off 3.7% from the previous month.

  At the national level, housing starts dropped 3.1% as a higher number of starts registered in Quebec (+7.8%) and BC were offset by sharp declines posted by Ontario (-16.3%), Nova Scotia (-43.6%) and Alberta (-8.3%).

  Data Source: CMHC

- **British Columbia's New Housing Price Index (NHPI) rose 4.7% between May 2009 and May 2010.** In Vancouver, builders' prices for new homes increased for a fourth straight month, jumping 5.8%. However, new house prices in Victoria continue to slide, falling 3.9% year-over-year.

  Canada's NHPI rose 2.9% with many builders in the Prairies citing increased costs for building materials as the reason for the increase in prices for new homes there.

  Data Source: Statistics Canada

Recycling

- **By 2007, recycling was available to the vast majority (97%) of British Columbian households.** This contrasts starkly with the 78% that had access to recycling services in 1994. Of those who were able to recycle, nearly all (98%) chose to do so with over one-half (52%) of recyclers reporting that all of their recyclable waste was recycled. Another third (33%) claimed that they recycled most of their waste, while a further 15% said they recycled some, but not most, of their waste. Of those that chose not to recycle, the most often cited reasons were that recycling was inconvenient (43%), required too much time and effort (40%) or that recyclables took up too much space (33%).

  Those engaged in recycling activities were most strongly associated with households that had access to a curb-side pick-up service. Higher levels of education, higher income and living in detached homes were also factors that made access to recycling programs more likely.

  Provincially, Ontario (99%), Nova Scotia (99%) and Prince Edward Island (99%) all registered recycling rates above the national level. However, households in Newfoundland and Labrador (94%) and New Brunswick (91%) were the least likely to participate in recycling. *Data Source: Stats Can Cat. no. 16-001-M*

Driving

- **British Columbians drove slightly less (-0.4%) in 2009 compared to 2008.** While the number vehicles on the road rose 0.7% in 2009, the average number of kilometres driven per vehicle (13,209 km) fell 1.1%.

  At the national level, driving was up 2.4% in 2009 with both the number of vehicles (+1.7%) and the average number of kilometres driven (16,249 km; +0.6%) increasing compared to the previous year.

  Data Source: Statistics Canada

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For data originating from Statistics Canada, data sourced to 'Statistics Canada' has been retrieved from CANSIM, the agency's electronic database; otherwise the source is identified as 'SC' plus the catalogue number.

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High Technology Occupations

The concept of high technology is somewhat nebulous as the rapid pace of technological advancement may mean that something that is considered high tech today could be supplanted by a newer, better technology within a couple of years. Nevertheless, given the economic importance of high technology, it is important to examine progress in this sector.

To this end, BC Stats has produced annual profiles of the high technology sector that employ two different definitions of high technology—one that specifies high tech industries using the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) and another that classifies high technology goods using the Harmonized System (HS) classification of commodities[1]. Another way to define high technology is to look at high tech occupations.

One of the problems with coming up with a definition of high technology occupations is that most occupations involve the use of technology on one level or another. For this report, the definition used is based on one developed by the US Bureau of Labor. As the occupation data in the BC Labour Market Scenario Model (BCLMSM) are currently only available at the three-digit occupational code level, the high technology definition used here is necessarily limited to three-digit codes. The following table lists the occupation codes that are considered high technology for the purposes of this report:

High Technology Occupations

211- Physical Science Professionals
212- Life Science Professionals
213- Civil, Mechanical, Electrical and Chemical
214- Other Engineers
217- Computer and Information Systems
221- Technical Occupations in Physical
222- Technical Occupations in Life Sciences
224- Technical Occupations in Electronics and
321- Medical Technologists and Technicians (Except

Given the constraints of having to use occupational aggregates, there will be some non-high technology occupations included in this definition, but this should have a minimal impact on the analysis.

High technology occupations are usually highly skilled professions requiring years of training and, as a result, individuals working in these occupations are in demand. In general, the incidence of unemployment in high tech occupations is significantly lower than overall unemployment rates. For example, from 2007 through 2009, the unemployment rate in high technology was more than a full percentage point lower than the overall rate for British Columbia. There was some variability among the occupations that comprise high technology, but for each, unemployment was less prevalent than for the aggregate of all occupations.

This report is based on data extracted from the inaugural release of the BC Labour Market Scenario Model (BCLMSM); the model provides high quality labour supply and demand forecast information for British Columbia. The BCLMSM project was undertaken by BC Stats and the Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development), in partnership with the Ministry of Finance.

The full British Columbia Labour Market Outlook (2009-2019) report can be accessed at:
http://www.workbc.ca/docs/BCLMOutlook.pdf

[1] The latest of these was produced in September 2008: Profile of the British Columbia High Technology Sector: 2008 Edition.

However, high technology did not escape the economic downturn as the unemployment rate for high tech occupations almost doubled between 2008 and 2009, rising from 3.3% to 6.5%. Some individual high tech occupations experienced even sharper downturns. For example, civil, mechanical, electrical and chemical engineers recorded a remarkably low unemployment rate of 2.8% in 2008. The following year, unemployment in that occupation ballooned to 7.1%, although that was still lower than the 7.6% rate across all occupations in British Columbia.

As with overall unemployment, there is significant regional variation in unemployment in the high tech occupations. The economic downturn affected some sectors more than others and resource-based industries such as forestry and mining, were hard hit. These industries are not normally considered in the context of high technology; however, they do employ people in high tech occupations, such as engineers and physical science professionals and, as such, the slump in these industries affected employment in high tech occupations. For example, in North Coast and Nechako, a region that has a strong dependence on resource industries, overall high tech occupational unemployment jumped from 5.5% in 2008 to 11.0% in 2009, which exceeded even the overall unemployment rate for the region of 10.4%.

Despite the jump in unemployment in 2009, there were still over 107,000 people employed in high technology occupations in British Columbia, which is almost identical to the number working in high tech occupations in 2007. In other words, all the growth that occurred in 2008 in this occupational group was wiped out by the recession of 2009. Growth in the labour force was not only maintained, but actually increased as deaths and retirements were outnumbered by net in-migration (i.e., people moving to a new location, people changing occupations) and new entrants (e.g., graduating students), which resulted in the rise in unemployment.

Overall, in British Columbia, 4.7% of the province's employment was in high technology occupations. Regionally, Mainland/Southwest recorded the largest proportion of employment in high tech occupations, at 5.3%. All other regions had high tech shares less than the provincial average, with Vancouver Island/Coast, at 4.4%, the only other region with more than four percent of total employed working in high tech occupations.

2009 Employment (000's)

Region	High Tech	Overall	% High Tech
Vancouver Island/ Coast	16.9	379.4	4.4
Mainland/ Southwest	73.5	1,399.8	5.3
Thompson-Okanagan	8.7	256.7	3.4
Kootenay	2.5	70.4	3.5
Cariboo	2.7	75.6	3.5
North Coast & Nechako	1.5	40.6	3.8
Northeast	1.3	36.9	3.4
British Columbia	**107.0**	**2,259.4**	**4.7**

The forecast is for high technology to continue to grow as a portion of British Columbia's workforce. By 2019, high technology occupations are expected to comprise 4.9% of overall employment. Most of the growth will occur in Mainland/Southwest and Vancouver Island/ Coast. Although all regions are expected to see high tech occupational employment grow over the next ten years, for those regions in the northern part of the province, other occupational groups are expected to see faster growth, such that high tech as a proportion of overall employment may decline slightly.

Projected 2019 Employment (000's)

Region	High Tech	Overall	% High Tech
Vancouver Island/ Coast	21.7	462.2	4.7
Mainland/ Southwest	90.8	1,651.7	5.5
Thompson-Okanagan	10.4	301.4	3.5
Kootenay	2.9	82.9	3.5
Cariboo	3.2	91.2	3.5
North Coast & Nechako	2.0	54.0	3.7
Northeast	1.4	43.7	3.3
British Columbia	**132.4**	**2,687.1**	**4.9**

It is projected that by 2019 there will be 132,400 people working in high technology occupations in British Columbia. Among the high tech occupations, the fastest growing group in terms of employment is expected to be medical technologists and technicians. Employment in these occupations is projected to climb 31% from 2009 to 2019. Given that the baby boom generation is starting to reach retirement age and the average age of British Columbia's population is increasing as a result, the health care system will have greater demands placed upon it and an increase in workers in occupations related to health care will be necessary.

The average age of those in high technology occupations (employed and unemployed) is marginally higher than the average age of British Columbia's labour force overall (41.0 years versus 40.7 years) and this disparity is expected to widen over time, such that high tech workers are projected to average a full year older by 2019. The reason for this is that the rate of retirement among high tech occupations is lower than the overall rate of retirement for all workers in the province and this is expected to continue to be the case through most of the projection period. Also, despite the slightly older age profile, there are fewer deaths per person in the labour force in high tech occupations.

Regionally, Mainland/Southwest tends to have a slightly younger age profile for those working in high tech occupations than the rest of the province; however, this is true of the overall labour force as well. The Kootenay region has the oldest high tech workers, on average, almost three years older than the average age of those in Mainland/Southwest.

Some of the variance in age is likely due to regional differences in the types of occupations that comprise each region's high technology work force. For example, computer and information systems professionals make up a third of those working in high tech occupations in Vancouver Island/ Coast and approximately 40% of those in Mainland/Southwest; however, this occupational group is a far smaller share of the overall high tech sector in other regions, ranging from 17% in Thompson-Okanagan to less than 2% in Northeast. Those working in this occupational group are younger, on average, than all the other high technology occupations.

The adoption of cutting edge technology is a critical component of improving productivity and maintaining economic growth. Also, high tech jobs are usually well paid, which supports employment in other sectors, such as retail and tourism. If the forecasted growth in employment in high technology occupations transpires, it should bode well for British Columbia's economy.

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BC at a glance . . .

POPULATION (thousands)	Apr 1/2010	% change on one year ago
BC	4,510.9	1.6
Canada	34,019.0	1.2
GDP and INCOME (Revised Nov 9)		
(BC - at market prices)	2008	% change on one year ago
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) *($ millions)*	197,931	3.3
GDP *($ 2002 millions)*	164,520	0.0
GDP *($ 2002 per Capita) (reflects revised pop)*	37,529	-1.7
Personal Disposable Income *($ 2002 per Capita)*	25,931	3.2
TRADE ($ millions, seasonally adjusted)		% change on prev. month
Manufacturing Shipments - Apr 2010	2,928	-2.5
Merchandise Exports - Apr 2010	2,328	2.1
Retail Sales - Apr 2010	4,841	-0.7
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX	% change on	12-month avg
(all items - May 2010)	one year ago	% change
BC	0.6	-0.1
Vancouver	1.1	0.2
Victoria	0.2	-0.1
Canada	1.4	0.6
LABOUR FORCE (thousands)		
(seasonally adjusted)	May 2010	% change on prev. month
Labour Force - BC	2,479	-0.2
Employed - BC	2,293	-0.4
Unemployed - BC	187	3.3
		Apr 2010
Unemployment Rate - BC *(percent)*	7.5	7.3
Unemployment Rate - Canada *(percent)*	8.1	8.1
INTEREST RATES (percent)	Jul 7/2010	Jul 8/2009
Prime Business Rate	2.50	2.25
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	3.50	3.75
- 5 year	5.79	5.85
US-CANADA EXCHANGE RATE	Jul 7/2010	Jul 8/2009
(avg. noon spot rate) Cdn $ per US $	1.0527	1.1655
(closing rate) US $ per Cdn $	0.9544	0.8565
AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGE RATE		
(industrial aggregate - dollars)	May 2010	% change on one year ago
BC	828.89	4.9
Canada	815.69	2.5

SOURCES:

Population, Gross Domestic Product, Trade, Prices, Labour Force, Wage Rate } Statistics Canada

Interest Rates, Exchange Rates: Bank of Canada Weekly Financial Statistics

For latest Weekly Financial Statistics see www.bankofcanada.ca

2011 Census News

The 2011 Census will consist of the same eight questions that appeared on the 2006 Census short-form questionnaire. And that's it.

The information previously collected by the mandatory long-form census questionnaire will be collected as part of the new voluntary National Household Survey (NHS). The NHS questionnaire will include questions on language, immigration, Aboriginal peoples, mobility, ethnicity, education, labour, income and housing. It will exclude the question asking for consent to release personal census information to Library and Archives Canada after 92 years as this is only required by the census.

The NHS will be conducted within four weeks of the May 2011 Census. Approximately, 4.5 million households will receive the NHS questionnaire, up from the 2.9 million households that would have received the census mandatory long-form questionnaire. Statistics Canada will conduct and release the results of this survey by applying sound methods and standards. Following the 2006 Census release schedule, the first NHS data would be released in December 2012. Statistics Canada will try to follow this schedule. However, this is a new survey so there is some uncertainty as to the length of time required to certify the data prior to release.

If you have questions, please contact Rosemary Bender at rosemary.bender@statcan.gc.ca or Peter Morrison at peter.morrison@statcan.gc.ca.

http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/ref/gazette-eng.cfm

Released this week by BC Stats

- Labour Force Statistics, June 2010
- Earnings & Employment Trends, June 2010
- Tourism Sector Monitor, June 2010
- Business Indicators, June 2010

Next week

- Exports, May 2010

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